



ACTIVIST STEVE BLACK IS CANDIDATE IN PRIMARY

Steve Black, of Wind Gap, has been selected by Al Gore's Presidential Campaign to run for Delegate to the Democratic National Convention. Steve will be the first openly gay candidate to run for a delegate position in the Lehigh Valley. Steve is a founding member of the Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Political Action (PA-GALA) and currently serves as PA-GALA's Political Director.

Steve states, "This is a great honor for me, PA-GALA, and the Lehigh Valley Lesbian and Gay community. My selection shows the growing political power of our community and importance of gay votes in Presidential and local elections."

Twelve candidates for delegate will be on the ballot in the 15th Congressional District, which includes all of Lehigh and Northampton Counties. Five delegates are pledged to Al Gore and five are pledged to Bill Bradley. Originally PA-GALA Board Member and Co-Chair of GLEE at Air Products Tracy Denton, was to run as a Bradley Delegate but she was bumped by the Democratic Committee in favor of State Senator Lisa Boscola.

Five delegates will be elected in the April 4 primary and will attend the 2000 Democratic Convention to be held in Los Angeles in August. In order to be a delegate, Steve must be elected by Democratic voters in the Primary. The delegates at the convention will set party rules and choose the Democratic Candidate for President. Steve Black is running as a delegate committed to Vice President Al Gore. However, Democrats may vote for Steve as a delegate even if they are voting for Bradley.

Steve Black has served on the Northampton County Democratic Committee (1986-1994) and on the Pen Argyl Area School Board (1991-1994).

The Pennsylvania Primary Election is Tuesday, April 4. Be sure you are registered to vote by March 6th.

**TO SECURE HIS PLACE
ON THE BALLOT, STEVE
NEEDED TO GATHER
250 SIGNATURES.
WITH THE HELP OF PA-
GALA MEMBERS,
STEVE WAS ABLE TO
OBTAIN OVER 500
SIGNATURES AND
FILE 465 WITH THE
BUREAU OF
ELECTIONS.**

GLBT @ VYH TEEN SUPPORT GROUP GETS NATIONAL HEADLINE

GLBT @ VYH

The new Valley Youth House GLBT youth support group, created and organized by VYH intern Steve Libby, received national media exposure on the Advocate Headlines Web Site. The daily updated site focused on the Morning Call article written by Chris Parker, which had featured information about the program and quotes by program leader Steve Libby, LV-PFLAG Pres., Ilse Stoll, MCC-LV Minister Elizabeth Goudy, and PA-GALA-LV Chair, Liz Bradbury. A shortened version of Parker's article and Bradbury's quote, appeared on the web page.

PATTI MITTLEMAN RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Patti Mittleman, Muhlenberg College's Jewish chaplain, was one of seven people world-wide honored with the Hillel Exemplar of Excellence Award. Which is given to professionals for outstanding efforts on behalf of Jewish college students.

Of her work Mittleman says, "they are adults in training. So if we can model a kind of behavior that they want to emulate, then we've kind of done our job as chaplains." Mittleman, a long time activist, is well known in our community for her support of gay and lesbian youth. Matthew Soffer, a sophomore from Cherry Hill, N.J. said of Patti, "I have no doubt that Patti has saved many students from committing suicide because of the pressures of being gay or bisexual, having drug abuse problems or any other issue..." VFP congratulates Patti on her outstanding commitment and the well deserved honor.

MCC CELEBRATES FREEDOM TO MARRY DAY

On Sunday February 13, the The Metropolitan Community Church LV will worship with a special service honoring, recognizing, and celebrating same sex marriages and celebrating National Freedom to Marry Day (NFMD). See article page 3.

MICHELANGELO SIGNORILE TO SPEAK AT MUHLENBERG

On Thursday March 16, 7:30 pm gay activist Michelangelo Signorile will speak at Muhlenberg College, in Trumbower Bldg. rm. 130, as the guest of the student organization BGLA (Bisexual, Gay, and Lesbian Advocates). The talk is free and open to the public.

Signorile, who is Editor at Large of the Advocate, will discuss the controversial topic of "outing" defined as involuntary outing from the closet of influential gay and lesbian persons.

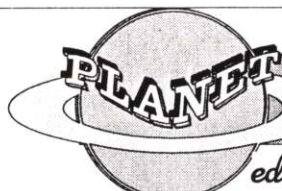
LOCAL BORDERS BOOKS FOUND TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST GAY TEENS



SEE PAGE 6

STILL TIME
TO ORDER
GAY MEN'S CHORUS
SINGING TELEGRAMS
FOR VALENTINES DAY
SEE PAGE 3

Valley Free Press does not discriminate on the basis of: race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or place of birth, sex, handicap or disability, marital status, family status, age, use of a guide animal, sexual orientation, or transgender status, and asks that organizations which request VFP to publish information about their events maintain a similar policy against discrimination.



Parenthood

edited by Emily Dugan

2

"Teachable Moments"

Child development and parenting expert, Barry Zuckerman often talks about "teachable moments." These are instances when we give a child an important message by how we respond to a particular situation: what we do, don't do, say, or don't say. Teachable moments happen every day. They range from minor to profound, and the effect is cumulative.

I am most effective as a parent if I have clearness about what messages I want to teach my child, have the ability to recognize when a teachable moment is happening, and am able to respond in a way that is in line with the values I want to teach.

Gay and lesbian parents have to cover all the same general issues as heterosexual parents, plus some additional material. I knew some day I'd have to answer the "where is my daddy question" but it came up much earlier than I anticipated. Our two year old daughter is cared for three days a week by a wonderful woman who has a husband and two little girls. At age twenty months, our daughter was just starting simple two and three word sentences. One evening as we were getting ready for bed, she very clearly referred to these two little girls and their daddy.

Then she gave me an intense questioning look and said, "Me da-da?" Despite my soaring blood pressure, I looked at her with my relaxed mother smile, with that I-love-you twinkle in my eye, and said matter of factly, "No da-da, two mommies!"

The next morning, she spontaneously repeated my words verbatim with a big smile. And she repeated them again several times in the next few weeks. She seemed so happy to have the words to describe this very important thing about her world.

This was an important teachable moment. Hopefully I gave her a positive feeling about our family and clear simple truth. Hopefully, I avoided any sense of anxiety, shame or apology. Had I avoided the question or looked very anxious, I would have taught the exact opposite of what I had wanted.

Four months later, sitting in chairs waiting at a crowded airport, our little girl stood in the center of the aisle and alternately pointed to each of us, enthusiastically saying, "One mommy, two mommy!"

I didn't hush her, but rather pushed aside my anxiety and smiled at her warmly.

I know things will get more complicated, but I hope this is a good start. My greatest hope for our daughter is that she learn to speak her truth and live a life consistent with positive values. Hopefully we can guide her in this direction with many teachable moments to come.

PARENTS BEGIN INFORMAL GROUP

On Saturday, Jan 29, a group of L.V. area lesbian mothers got together for an informal pot-luck dinner. There were 16 moms and 9 children, ranging in age from 6 months to 9 years.

The kids had a great time playing together and it was good for them to have the affirmation of seeing other happy families just like their own. For the moms, it was a wonderful chance to relax and share ideas and support.

Conversation ranged from general issues about raising children to topics unique to our families, such as two moms interacting with health care providers, day care providers, and teachers. Some women expressed frustration with an unfair legal system that does not recognize our families and how this negatively impacts legal and financial security for us and our children. Some conversation was serious, but mostly there was a lot of laughter and fun.

This is a group of parents who know the value of a good sense of humor (and the many uses of duct tape). This informal parent network plans to have occasional pot-lucks. If you are a lesbian mom or gay dad and would like to be included, contact VFP, 610-432-5449.

RAGS TO RICHES TAKE THE FIRST STEP

by Denise McKelvey

Dear Denise,

For some time, I have been thinking of starting an investment portfolio. I have heard that mutual funds are a good way to invest. What do you think? Procrastinating in PA

Dear Procrastinating,

First, you haven't provided me with any personal information, like age, goals, time frame for the money, your objectives, tax situation, etc. So, let's start with what a mutual fund is.

Many companies offer mutual funds to the public. Each fund has an objective that is approved and monitored by the NASD. The company must stay within certain guidelines as to what type of stock or bond it is able to invest in. For instance, the fund objective may be growth in value rather than generating an income.

The company will buy and sell individual stocks on a daily basis to meet its growth objective. In reality, you will own a small piece of 200 different companies that are within that particular mutual fund. Some benefits are that YOU don't have to do the research on what stocks to buy or sell and when. These professionals have the expertise and the information to make the decision as to what stock or industry may generate the greatest potential to meet the funds growth objective. A company can't buy and sell individual stocks for free. There will be a cost of doing business. You are paying for their knowledge, research and time.

Before choosing an investment, the timeframe you have in mind as to when you will need the money, will make a difference as to what type of mutual fund is right for you. The types of mutual funds are too numerous to list. Obtain information and educate yourself. Talk to people and seek advice from KNOWLEDGEABLE individuals. ASK QUESTIONS! More importantly, DO SOMETHING! Make the Year 2000, the best year ever, personally and financially.

GAY / STRAIGHT STUDENTS GROUPS BACKED BY COURTS

There are now over 700 "Gay Straight Alliance" support groups for students in high schools across the country. A recent court decision, in Orange County California, supported a newly formed GSA at El Modena High School even though the school board refused to allow it.

In 1984, conservative law makers pushed legislation to create the Equal Access Act. This law was intended to support the formation of religious clubs that met on public school grounds. But it is now serving to support the existence of GSAs, because in effect, the law says no group can be denied equal access just because some people do not agree with its ideas. The only recourse to legally stop students from forming Gay Straight Alliances in public school, is for the school system to ban all after school clubs and activities. The creation of GSAs in schools is backed by law. All that is needed is students willing to start them.

PFLAG MEETING PLACE CHANGED

PFLAG LV, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of the Lehigh Valley, will no longer be meeting at Cedar Crest College. The February 13 meeting and future meetings will be held at Northampton Community College in the Student Center, Room 134, (park in lots A or C) at 3 pm. Business meetings for the Board will begin at 2 pm. For further information call the PFLAG Hotline at 610-967-5219.

ACCO EVENTS

ACCO, A Chorus Celebrating Women, will sponsor high-energy drumming workshops and performances by nationally-known percussionist and recording artist Ubaka Hill on Friday, March 10, and Saturday, March 11, at Sayre Hall, The Cathedral Church of the Nativity at 321 Wyandotte St. in Bethlehem. Hill will conduct a community drumming circle on Friday evening and an intensive workshop on Saturday afternoon, and will perform in concert on Saturday evening.

ACCO SPRING CALENDAR:

- Ubaka Hill Community and School Workshops and Concert, March 10 & 11.
- Wednesday March 22, ACCO will sing at the Annual Member Reception for the Lehigh Valley Arts Council to be held at the new Trexler Pavilion for Theatre and Dance, Muhlenberg College. The reception will be in the lobby of the Dorothy Hess Baker Theatre from 5 to 7 pm.
- Stroudsburg Library, March 24, for the Stroudsburg Women's Center.
- Godfrey Daniels, April 14, 2000.
- Northeast Middle School Spring Concert, April 27, performing commissioned pieces by Ysaye Barnwell for ACCO & Children's Chorus.
- Children's Festival, Rose Garden, in June.
- For further information call 610-760-1759.

PA-GALA VOTER INFO

To be able to vote for Steve Black, the 1st openly gay activist ever on the 15th District Ballot. You must be registered to vote as a Democrat and live in Lehigh or Northampton Counties. The deadline to register is Monday, March 6. If you have moved since you last voted, you should complete a new registration form. Only people registered as Democrats or Republicans can vote in the PA Primary. If you will be out of the county on Tuesday, April 4 you can vote by absentee ballot. If you need to register, change your address, change your party, or request an absentee ballot contact PA-GALA -610-432-5449, or Steve Black, 610-863-4668.

WDIY PROGRAMMING

WDIY's membership meetings are held the 1st Monday of each month at Godfrey Daniels on Fourth St. in Bethlehem at 7 pm. Some meetings are open to the general public. Listeners are encouraged to express their views on programming. If you are unable to attend these meetings call the station's Listener Line, 610-694-8100 ext. 8.

GAY MEN'S CHORUS

Order your singing telegrams now for Valentines Weekend (Feb 12,13,14). Say "I love you" with a song, a card, and a rose (anywhere in the ABE area). \$40, reservations call 610-366-3320.

The Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus presents "Some Enchanted Evening" the songs of Rodgers and Hammerstein on March 3 and 4, (Dinner Theatre) at UUCLV, 424 Center St., Bethlehem. \$20 per person, reservations 610-366-3320, and the same performance as Cabaret Theatre on March 10,11, and 12 at Odette's Cabaret, South River Road, New Hope, PA, \$15 per person, reservations 215-862-2432.

GLBT @ VFH YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS GROW

Though the first meeting of GLBT@VFH was canceled due to snow, the article by Chris Parker that appeared in the *Morning Call* the previous day generated 20 positive phone calls. Information about the group for High School aged teens, which was created and is run by VFH staff intern Steve Libby, was broadcast by radio stations B104, WZZO, and WDIY. The second meeting was attended by three teens, and attendance more than tripled at the third.

"GLBT@VFH" meets every Tuesday, 6-8 pm at Valley Youth House 524 Walnut Street, Allentown. For information call 610-432-6481. Donations of resource materials, books, magazines, videos, or money to purchase these items is needed.

FEB. 19 TH ST. MOVIES ARE:

"The Source" 2/6 2:00pm, 2/7-2/9 7:30 pm
Documentary about 50's beat writers Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, "American Movie" 2/10 9:30 pm, 2/11, 8:00 pm 2/12, 4:00 & 7:00 pm, 2/13 4:30 pm. Documentary about what it takes to make a low budget movie in Wisconsin, "Dreaming of Joseph Lees" 2/12 9:30 pm, 2/13 2:00 & 7:00 pm, 2/14-2/17 7:30 pm, 2/18 8:00 pm, 2/19 4:00 & 7:00 pm, 2/20 4:30 pm. A heart-rending British tale starring Rupert Graves, "Sweet and Lowdown" 2/19 9:30 pm, 2/20 2:00 & 7:30 pm, 2/21-2/24 7:30 pm, 2/25 8:00 pm, 2/26 7:00 & 9:30 pm. Woody Allen film about Jazz music in the 1930's.

SPARC MEETS AT KU

The SPARC steering committee will meet at Kutztown University on Feb.26, from 12-6 pm. The six hour meeting will be held in the Student Union Building, room 253.

GLORA EVENTS

GLOSS has invited GLORA (the Gay and Lesbian Organization of Reading and Allentown) to join them for their next game night in Bethlehem on Feb 19th at 7 pm.

For skiing and tubing at Bear Creek Ski and Recreation Area in Macungie (formerly Doe Mountain) reserve Feb 26th 5 pm to 10 pm. email <GLORAINPA@aol.com> for details and directions.

GLORA also reports that 32 members gathered at Bowers Hotel for the GLORA 10th anniversary dinner. The food was excellent and the event a huge success.

GLOSS

The next GLOSS (Gay and Lesbian Organized Sports Society) Game Night will take place on Saturday, February 19 at 7 pm at Steve's house in Saucon Valley. This will be a combined event with GLORA. For directions, please email Steve at <flash@early.com>.

As customary, food and drinks will be provided, a \$5 contribution is appreciated. Feel free to bring a guest, and a favorite game if you have one.

KINDRED SPIRITS

Kindred Spirits, the support and social group for women loving women, meets weekly at UUCLV, 424 Center St. Bethlehem. For information call Chris, 610-868-0248.

MCC CELEBRATES FREEDOM TO MARRY DAY

On Sunday, February 13, the The Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley will worship with a special service celebrating National Freedom to Marry Day (NFMD). The service will be highlighted by Rev. Delores Berry, singer, evangelist, speaker, and preacher.

MCC/LV has chosen Sunday, February 13 (6 pm) to celebrate the freedom to marry for two reasons: equality and love. Abraham Lincoln's birthday is a time to think about equality; Valentine's Day is a time to think of love. There's no better time to mark the importance of ending sex discrimination in marriage and allowing lesbian and gay couples to share in the celebration, rights, responsibilities, and protections of legal marriage.

MCC/LV has officially installed Rev Elizabeth Goudy, as the fourth pastor of the 15 year old congregation. Goudy is a graduate of the University of Chicago Divinity School and was ordained by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in August 1999.

For church information call 610-954-7775 or email <mcc@starplace.com>, website: <http://mcc.starplace.com>. MCC meets at at UUCLV, 424 Center St, Bethlehem.



ONLY PAID PA-GALA MEMBERS GOT THIS ISSUE OF VFP IN THE MAIL. JOIN PA-GALA TO GET A SUBSCRIPTION.

CALENDAR

4

FEBRUARY 2000

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 PA-GALA	2	3	4	5
6 GLOSS UUCLV WDIY	7 RAA INTEGRITY	8 LVGMC GLOSS	9 19th St. Movie ←	10 ACCO RAA GLOSS	11 KS	12 GLOSS WDIY UUVLV dinner
13 GLOSS UUCLV MCC NCFM P-FLAG	14 RAA 	15 GLOSS LVGMC GLBT @ VYGLT	16 19th St. Movie ←	17 ACCO RAA GLOSS	18 KS	19 GLOSS WDIY
20 UUCLV MCC NCFM GLOSS WDIY	21 RAA 	22 GLOSS LVGMC GLBT @ VYGLT	23 19th St. Movie ←	24 ACCO RAA GLOSS	25 KS	26 SPARC GMLV WDIY GLOSS GLORA
27 GLOSS MCC NCFM WDIY GLOSS	28 RAA	29 GLOSS LVGMC GLBT @ VYGLT Take a LEAP!!!				

MARCH 2000 BE SURE YOU ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE BY MARCH 6!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	LAST DAY TO REGISTER		1	2 T.O.	3 GAY MENS	4 CHORUS
5 GLOSS UUCLV WDIY	6 RAA INTEGRITY	7 LVGMC GLOSS PA-GALA Marti Gras	8	9 ACCO RAA GLOSS	10 ACCO KS GAY MENS	11 GMLV GLOSS WDIY CHORUS
12 GLOSS UUCLV MCC NCFM P-FLAG	13 RAA	14 GLOSS LVGMC PRIDE GLBT @ VYH	15	16 SIGNORILE ACCO GLOSS	17 KS	18 GLOSS WDIY
19 UUCLV MCC NCFM GLOSS WDIY ACCO	20	21 GLOSS LVGMC GLBT @ VYH	22	23 ACCO RAA GLOSS	24 KS	25 GMLV GLOSS WDIY
26 GLOSS MCC NCFM WDIY MS GLOSS	27 RAA	28 GLOSS LVGMC GLBT @ VYH	29	30 ACCO RAA GLOSS	31 KS	

APRIL 2000 HEY LOOK IT'S SPRING ALREADY!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 GLOSS UUCLV WDIY	3 RAA INTEGRITY	4 Primary Election Vote!!!	5	6 ACCO RAA GLOSS	7 KS	8 GLOSS WDIY
9 GLOSS UUCLV MCC NCFM P-FLAG	10 RAA	11 GLOSS LVGMC PRIDE GLBT @ VYH	12	13 ACCO RAA GLOSS	14 KS	15 GLOSS WDIY
16 UUCLV MCC NCFM GLOSS WDIY	17 RAA	18 GLOSS LVGMC GLBT @ VYH	19	20 PASSOVER ACCO GLOSS RAA	21 KS	22 GMLV GLOSS WDIY
23 GLOSS MCC NCFM WDIY EASTER	24 RAA	25 GLOSS LVGMC GLBT @ VYH	26	27 ACCO RAA GLOSS	28 KS	29 GLOSS WDIY

ACCO- A Chorus Celebrating Women, Rehearsals, Thursdays 7-10pm at UUCLV Bethlehem, 610.760.1759

AIDS Outreach-112 N. 5th St. Allentown, PA 610.435.8424

AIDSWALK- AIDSWALK Lehigh Valley - 610.974.8701 www.regiononline.com/laids

ASC- AIDS Service Center 610.974.8701

BMA- Bucks/Montgomery Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Concerns 215-529-0360

B&N- Barnes and Noble Gay & Lesbian Book Club, White Hall store, Monthly, 7:00pm.

Enigma Players 610-432-0706

EQUAL at Lucent Technologies 610.712.5532

FACT- Fighting AIDS Continuously Together 610.820.5519

GMBG- Gay Men's Buddist Group- Meditation and discussion, 610-776-1768

GLEE at Air Products

GLASS- at Lehigh Univ. Every other Thursday 6pm, 2nd fl. Lamberon Hall, 610.758.3469

GLISN- at Dun & Bradstreet

GLORA- Gay and Lesbian Organization of Reading and Allentown (Social gatherings, various dates) Newsletter- The Tassle. Write to: P.O. Box 1952, Allentown PA 18105-1952, email- GLORAINPA@AOL.COM

GLOSS- Gay and Lesbian Organized Sports Society, P.O. Box 21862 Lehigh Valley, PA 18002 Volleyball, Tennis, Racquet Ball 610.434.2966

GMLV- Gay Men of the Lehigh Valley, 2nd and 4th Saturday Monthly 7pm UUCLV, Bethlehem, 610.820.0977.

Integrity- Lesbian and Gay Episcopalians Family and Friends 1st Monday each month 7pm Trinity Episcopal Church 2nd Floor Chapel, 44 E. Market Street Bethlehem. 610-758-8642

KS-Kindred Spirits- Support, discussion, and social group for lesbians and bisexual women Fridays at 6:30pm, Contact : Chris at 610-868-0248

LVGMC- Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus, Rehearsals Tuesdays, UUCLV Bethlehem. 610.366.3320, steveo@early.com

MS - Moravian Sanctuary, PO Box 5053, Bethlehem, PA 10815.

MCC- Metropolitan Community Church, office- 424 Center St. (UUCLV), Bethlehem, 6 pm Sundays, 610.954.7775

NCC- Northampton Community College Gay Lesbian and Bisexual Student Union, Meetings every Monday from 4pm to 6pm at CC114 (Cohen Lounge), College Center call 610.861.5541 (#1386) or 882-2531

NEPATA- NorthEast PA Transgender Assoc see Renaissance

NCFM- New Covenant Family Ministries, Sundays, 11am, Open Space Gallery, 610-791-0716 / 740-3097, email NCFM98@aol.com

PA-GALA- PA Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Political Action, (Voter's Information Booklet, and Political Lobbying) 1st Tuesdays, Monthly P.O. Box 20825 Lehigh Valley 18002 610.432.5449

PFLAG- LV Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, 2nd Sundays 3pm 610.967.5219

Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Film Festival- Various locations and dates in July. 215.790.1510.

Pride - Pride of the Lehigh Valley, (Pride Festival) 2nd Tues. of the Month P.O. Box 20804 Lehigh Valley, 18002 610.770.6200

RAA- Rainbow AA meetings, Mon. & Thurs., Episcopal Church 16th and Turner, Allentown.

Ren- Renaissance Transgendered Assoc.,
PO Box 3624 Allentown, PA 18016
610- 821- 2955 renlv@ren.org
Rainbow Space - Muhlenberg College
Organization 610.821.3244
Reading P-FLAG- 610.488.7533 or 670.8029
Safe Space- At Lehigh U. 610.758.3469
Saint John's Lutheran Church- A welcoming,
gay affirming church, 32 S. 5th st. Allentown
610.435.1587
Softball- (Women's) call Diamondz,
610.865.1028
SC- Susquehanna Camping Club- 503
General Sutter Ave. Lititz, PA 17543,
www.paonline.com/outdoors
T.O. - Theatre Outlet- 29 N 9th St, Allentown,
610.820-9270.
TST- Touchstone Theatre, 321 E. 4th St. Beth.
610-867-1689, touchstone@nni.com
TriangleInterests- Lesbian Network and
Credit Union 215.487.3736... 215.508.1616
email TIFCU@aol.com
www.TRIANGLEINTERESTS.org
Jnity- 26 N. 3rd St. Emmaus, 767-4417
JUCLV- Unitarian Universalist Church of the
Lehigh Valley, 424 Center Street, Bethlehem,
18018 610.866.7652.
JFP- Valley Free Press 610.432.5449
NDIY - 88.1 fm 93.9 fm Saturday 7:30 pm
Assorted Women, Sunday 6:30pm- This Way
Out (sponsored by Equal at Lucent)
610.694.8100

SPECIAL UPCOMING EVENTS:

19TH ST. MOVIE "THE SOURCE"- FEB. 6-9

19TH ST. MOVIE "AM. MOVIE"- FEB. 10-13

UUCV SPAGHETTI DINNER- FEB 121

19TH ST. MOVIE

"DREAMING OF JOSEPH LEE"- FEB. 12-20

MCC LV- FREEDOM TO MARRY
FEB. 13

GLOSS GAME NIGHT- FEB. 19

19TH ST. MOVIE- SWEET AND LOWDOWN
FEB 19-26

SPARC MEETING- FEB. 26

SKI/TUBING (GLORA)
FEB. 26

T.O. VALLEY SONG- MARCH 2-19

GAY MEN'S CHORUS
SOME ENCHANTED EVENING
MARCH 3-4 AND MARCH 10-12

LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE
MARCH 6

UBAKA HILL & ACCO
MARCH 10-11

SIGNORILE SPEAKS AT MUHLENBERG
MARCH 10-11

GLBT@VYH
TEEN SUPPORT GROUP
EVERY TUESDAY

THE INFORMATION IN THIS
CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO
CHANGE. CALL TO CONFIRM.
PLEASE LET US LIST YOUR
EVENT. WE WILL PUBLISH
ARTICLES ABOUT LOCAL CLUBS
AND ORGANIZATIONS WHICH
ARE OF SERVICE OR INTEREST TO
THE GAY AND LESBIAN
COMMUNITY. FREE OF CHARGE.
PLEASE CONTACT
VFP - 610-432-5449.

ED VERBA RESPONDS TO ANTI-MARRIAGE COLUMN

Late last month, local activist Ed Verba sent a strong response to the Morning Call regarding Religious Ethics Columnist Michael McManus' article against the Vermont Marriage decision. Ed challenged many of the illogical arguments McManus used and also called to task the editors and journalists of the Morning Call for allowing McManus' article (in Ed's words) to "venture well beyond (opinion) with half truths, slanderous comments, and outright lies."

Here are some other excerpts from Ed's letter:

While defending marriage, Mr. McManus obviously has very little faith in it. There is not one heterosexual couple that is going to refuse to enter into marriage if they want, simply because they feel it has been sullied by gay's and lesbian's Freedom to Marry.

As an argument against gay and lesbian marriage, (McManus) sights the lowering rate of marriages and the rising rate of divorce... (Ed counters:) How can the gay and lesbian community be held responsible for the rise of divorce and the decrease of marriage if the community does not have the Freedom to Marry? His argument can be summed up as retroactive culpability.

(From McManus' article:) "Since 1960, divorces have tripled...one-third of babies are born out-of-wedlock...children living with single parents are in poverty (and) three times more likely to fail a grade or become pregnant as teens...(or) be expelled from school. (Ed asks:) "What does any of that have to do with gays and lesbians and the communities' search for the Freedom to Marry? Nothing..."

(McManus states") The law should not elevate same-sex couples to the same status as a married couple, when the result will literally condemn many to early, agonizing death." (Ed responds:) The logical argument is a 180 degree opposite...there is no reason to assume there would be any less commitment...it would seem the AIDS rate for gay men would actually fall, since there would be a Freedom to Marry and then commit. This speaks nothing to lesbians which, since the inception of AIDS, have been the LOWEST demographic in the epidemic (McManus fails to mention that).

McManus suggests that if gay men and lesbian were given the Freedom to Marry, that it would cost taxpayers money in... health benefits. (Ed replies:) This is totally the opposite of the truth -- IT'S A LIE! Health benefits are given by employers. They often account for up to 40% of the "package" when hired, they do not come from taxpayers.

(McManus brings up:) tax advantages and costing the taxpayers money...(Ed responds:) The gay and lesbian community are taxpayers too. Why should the benefits

offered be withheld from gays and lesbians? Truth be told, married gay men and married lesbians would pay more taxes than singles or co-habitants.

Mr. McManus uses the same argument that allowing same-sex marriages would destroy the family and cause disease that Adolph Hitler used in 1941 to persuade the German legislature to halt Jewish-Christian unions and the same argument that Strom Thurmond used in 1955 in front of the South Carolina legislature when it was repealing interracial bans on marriage. It was wrong in 1941, it was wrong in 1955 and it is no less wrong in 2000.

Ed Verba is Media Coordinator of the Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley.

VFP Editor's note: In the past, the Morning Call has been responsive and positive to letters supporting GLBT rights. VFP encourages everyone in the community to write to the Morning Call with praise or criticism concerning their coverage of GLBT issues.

UUCV EVENTS

The 12th annual Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley Men's Spaghetti Dinner will be on Feb 12, 6 pm. Donation \$6 in advance, \$8 at door, kids \$3, wine/beer \$3 extra. Everyone welcome.

UUCV announced support of Valley Youth House's program for GLBT teens and their friends in its Feb Newsletter, and stated there are UUCV HS students who have expressed an interest in participating in VYH's program.

TO2 SECOND STAGE

The Theatre Outlet's new TO2 Second Stage presented "Agnes of God" early this month. TO2 Second Stage is committed to emerging artists, new plays, collaborative and multidisciplinary work by Valley artists. Watch for more updates on TO2, and mark your calendars now for Theatre Outlet's next Mainstage offering, South African playwright Athol Fugard's beautiful Valley Song, directed by James Symmons (March 2-19). Theatre Outlet, 29 North 9th Street, Allentown 610-820-9270, Email <theatreoutlet@aol.com>, <www.theatreoutlet.org>.

FROM MCC-LV'S ON-LINE NEWLETTER

MCC-LV: We should remember in prayer and extend our sympathy to the family and friends of all the folks on Alaska Air Flight 261, and especially to the family of Craig Pulanco, formerly of Philadelphia and a frequent visitor to the Lehigh Valley, along with his partner, Paul Pulanco. Craig was a flight attendant on Alaska Air and Paul an AIDS case worker in Seattle. Both were on holiday in Mexico and both were killed in the tragic crash.

What's That About?

6



Readers write or email
"What's That About?"
editors with questions
about gay and lesbian issues.



Dear WTA,

I went to Borders Books in Whitehall to buy a copy of XY Magazine. When I went to pay for it, the cashier "carded" me. When I asked why, they said they did not sell "XY" to people under 18, because "your parents might complain." But it's not a porno magazine, it's just a gay magazine! What's this about? Travis Simmons

VFP called Travis. He wondered if this was just a cashier who was anti-gay or a store policy. So one of the VFP staff went to Borders to see. First she read "XY," which is written for gay male teens. She found it to be clever, not pornographic, and no more offensive than, say, "Seventeen."

Then she asked about the store's "carding" policy. A clerk told her they "carded" when a magazine is "bagged" (because it is sexually graphic). Our VFP rep, held up XY Magazine and the clerk said they would card for it too. "Why?" asked VFP. Answer: "Because some parents might object."

VFP asked if this was a Corporate Policy. The clerk said she'd ask the manager. He refused to come out of his office but substantiated the carding policy though the clerk. Finally a floor manager told VFP the policy was up to individual stores. When asked if Borders had an anti-discrimination policy, the floor manager stated defensively, "we don't discriminate against anybody!" VFP thanked them and left.

Next, VFP editors took Travis over to Barnes and Noble. Though they didn't have "XY" in stock, they said they'd order it for him, and took his name without carding him.

VFP editors researched both companies. According to HRC, Barnes and Noble gives domestic partnership benefits to its employees and has an anti-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation. Borders does not.

VFP called the Borders Corporation Headquarters and got through to the Head of Public Policy, Ms. Noori. She said stores only card for "bagged" magazines. So VFP told her what had happened to Travis and asked what the written policy states. "Well, we have no written policy because we find written policies can be mistaken for laws." Ms. Noori further stated that what probably happened was, the community was against this kind of literature so the store employees are responding to that attitude. For clarification she explained that if people complain about something then the local store might make it harder to buy. She referred to "Playboy" as an example.

VFP said, "but the manager who spoke to us said nothing about complaints, she only said parents might complain, further 'XY' is not a 'bagged' sex magazine, it's just a gay magazine." Ms. Noori did say that she would call the Whitehall store and tell them it was wrong to refuse to sell "XY" to teens and that she would even send an apology to Travis and a free magazine.

VFP told her that was nice, but what about all the other stores refusing to sell to gay teens? Why not just have a clear spelled-out policy that employees may not refuse to sell things to people unless the sale is illegal?

Ms. Noori explained that their employee manual is a very long (80 pages!), and they can't include everything. She said the employee handbook did have a section on anti-discrimination. VFP asked to hear it. "Sure," she said, (noise of pages turning... prolonged pause), "Well, I'm not the expert on this, but I'll email the exact statements to you today." That was several days ago.

Travis, currently Borders seems to be much more worried about offending bigots than upholding your rights. Let's hope they change their policy soon, meanwhile, shop somewhere else.

ANOTHER VIEW BY WILLIAM FETTERMAN

Growing Pains

It's never too late to grow up. I never realized how much room there is for me to grow, how much unresolved pain and inner-turmoil needs to be resolved. I grew up feeling very lonely, not knowing who to trust. And, as I came to continue developing feelings of same-sex attraction, it became clear that --at least according to the voices of authority-- such feelings were "wrong." The issue of trust is an especially painful part of my childhood. How many times would I talk to someone older than myself, telling deep, painful feelings in confidence, only to have that confidence broken?

So, here I am at middle-age, with a still-wounded little boy inside me who needs caring and affection. And, I'm meeting other gay men, just like myself, who have also come to this stage in life. Gone are the illusory distractions of trying to mask painful memories and feelings through cultural activities (i.e. movies, literature), religion (the as-if-by-magic "save me God" routine), compulsive sex, workaholicism, alcohol and drugs, etc. And, what's left? Me.

When I was a teenager in the 1970's, I was unaware of any kind of support group to help me with self-acceptance and healthy emotional / spiritual growth as a young gay man. At the time, the only mainstream image I knew from pop-culture and from its replication in the local bar scene, was "disco fever." That wasn't me. My role-model for a healthy gay sensibility was the composer John Cage (1912-1992). I'll always be grateful to John for not only his compositions and literary writings, but more importantly for his personal example. He was a mentor in the best sense of what that role entails. He affirmed me as a person, and my still-juvenile attempts at composition; he provided gentle yet loving criticism; and he expanded my intellectual / aesthetic / spiritual awareness. Most of all, he gave me the permission to simply be myself.

It was with some poignancy that I recently read in the Morning Call about a support group for Lehigh Valley teenagers who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. I wish this new group a lot of love and sustenance. I could have used such a support group 25 years ago.

In its place, what I've been doing is attending weekend retreat workshops for GBT men. Most of the attendees are just like me, middle-aged and at a cross-road in life, where mutual support and guidance become necessary. Baby-boomers like myself are used to "doing it alone" and being largely isolated and detached from intimate emotions. It's easy to talk about externals-- be it computer-speak, or that fabulous Bette Davis imitation. But what about the heart? As an "adult," I've learned to think, but too often I've also thought myself out of having and experiencing feelings.

It's been a year now that I've been writing this column. As always, these are essays of personal experience and opinion. Valley Free Press editor Liz Bradbury tells me that this column has been generating response. There are other gay men out there who are relating to what I'm writing about. Whenever I write one of these columns, I always read it over the phone to one or two of my friends for a response. They, too, tell me how they are able to relate to the material at hand.

I'm grateful to be doing these short pieces, and I'd appreciate hearing from any of the readers. I'm not on-line, but you can write to me in care of the Valley Free Press; P. O. Box 20825; Lehigh Valley, PA 18002. I'd appreciate hearing from you! Until next time, thank you.

PRIDE FESTIVALS

The Harrisburg Gay Pride Festival will be held on July 29 at River Front, from 11 am to 7 pm. Check next month's issue of VFP for information about the Lehigh Valley Pride Festival.

A VIEW FROM A DYKE BY LIZ BRADBURY

Go for the Brand Name

So Exxon merged with Mobil, forming a new corporation with the ingeniously creative name of Exxon-Mobil. It repealed Mobil's policy of employee Domestic Partnership Benefits and even worse, instructed its share holders to vote to withdraw "sexual orientation" from their employee Anti Discrimination Policy. This is bad. They won't be getting any more of my gas dollars.

But if not them, who? Luckily the Human Rights Campaign website lists companies with Anti Discrimination Policies (henceforth referred to as ADP) that include sexual orientation. These companies are good (at least in the gay rights department). And HRC also lists companies that give Domestic Partnership Benefits (DPB). These companies are even better.

So where do we buy gas? Texaco, Atlantic Richfield, and Sunoco have ADP which is good. But better yet, think ABCS. Amoco, BP, Chevron and Shell. They each give DPB and have ADP.

What about other stuff? Trying to decide between Cocoa Puffs, Cocoa Krispies, Grape Nuts, and Quaker Oatmeal? Well, Quaker and Kellogg (Cocoa Krispies) have ADP while Post (Grape Nuts) has nothing. Best to have the Cocoa Puffs because General Mills gives DPB and has ADP. They make Cheerios too for people who aren't too cool for Cocoa Puffs.

Need some cheap clothes? Sorry, Kmart and Walmart have nothing. But Sears gives both DPB and has an ADP. You can get anything at Sears.

What about fast food? While I thought I'd read something good about McDonald's recently, they aren't listed at all. In fact only Kentucky Fried Chicken has an ADP. So go to the supermarket. Giant Foods gives both DPB and has an ADP, sorry, not Wegman's. And while you're at Giant pick up one of those tubes of Pillsbury cinnamon rolls because they give DPB and have ADP. Didn't you just know that little Poppin' Fresh guy was on our side? Woo hoo.

Can't decide between Nike's and Reebok's? Well, you still can't, they both give DPB and have ADP. But next time you get a call from a long distance company, tell them you're going with AT&T because they give DPB and have an ADP while MCI and Sprint don't.

Beer? Only Coors supports us. Thinking about joining Sam's Club-nope, it's Costco that has both DPB and ADP. Choosing a hotel? Choose Marriott (Fairfield Inn, Courtyard Inn, Residence Inn) or Ritz Carlton. Airline? American, USAIR, and United. Have to make some copies? Staples has an ADP, but Kinko's has DPB and an ADP.

Want a toy? Stick with Matty Mattel. AVON calling? Come on in! Coke or Pepsi? Easy, Coke has both, Pepsi...nothing. Thinking about getting a magazine at Borders? See the article on page 6.

Like me, you may be happy to know that some old favorites: National Geographic, the Audubon Society, PBS, and National Public Radio, all support us.

How about local Colleges? No local Colleges are on the DPB list. How about Anti-Discrimination Policies covering employees? The Community Colleges, and Kutztown and Penn. State have ADP as parts of the State University system. Also having ADP are Muhlenberg and Lehigh Univ. But Lafayette, Moravian, Cedar Crest and Allen College aren't listed. Why not?...if you go there or work there, ask them.

PS. Begin rehearsing this line, "Honey, I had to get this quart of "Cherry Garcia," Ben and Jerry are committed to our rights!"

QUOTE FROM "WHO BENEFITS FROM AN ANTI-GAY EDUCATION"

"Lessening the fear and hatred of bigotry helps not only its targets but also the bigots themselves. Prejudice is a debilitating burden and letting it go allows a stunted mind to grow." by Arthur Lipkin (GLSEN)

MAYBE ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK BY PATRICIA SULLIVAN

People who have health insurance as an employment benefit often don't realize that those of us who don't, pay the monthly equivalent of a mortgage payment for comparable coverage. Usually both domestic partners are employed, so both have insurance coverage through their jobs. But we have friends whose partners are self-employed or who have severe health problems that make it very hard for them to obtain a reasonably priced "unsubsidized" comprehensive health policy. While many companies offer coverage for the partners and children of their legally married employees, it seems that few provide comparable benefits for the partners and children of gay and lesbians employees.

It's a big gamble not to have health insurance and the odds are against you. Having the option for coverage under a "subsidized" comprehensive health plan means you and your family can have less expensive and more comprehensive coverage than you might be able to afford if you have to purchase an individual policy outright. Family coverage is usually extended without any screening of prior medical history. You are probably aware that more and more businesses and companies are offering domestic partner health insurance coverage. So why don't more gay and lesbian partners take advantage of these benefits?

Well, same-sex partners are frequently reluctant to identify themselves to their employers as gay or lesbian. In a state like Pennsylvania, with no anti-discrimination protection, there's good reason to be cautious. In fact, some companies have refused to implement domestic partner benefits because they believe that the religious conservatives might view it as an endorsement of homosexuality or "special rights" and take their business elsewhere. The fact is, however, the vast majority of companies that implement domestic partner benefits do so entirely outside of public view. No successful company can afford not to compete. It is possible too that some people do not have domestic partner benefits simply because they have never asked for them. We know of someone in our own community who asked and got DP benefits in a company that only had 5-6 employees. It is even possible that the personnel staff are unaware that the insurance companies that provide coverage for their company can provide domestic partner coverage.

So if you work for a "friendly" supervisor or you feel comfortable to speak directly to your personnel officer about domestic partner health care coverage, here's some interesting information:

According to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, the following insurance companies offer domestic partner coverage in Pennsylvania. If you work for a company that has insurance through one of these companies, you may be able to get domestic partner coverage: Aetna Philadelphia/Pittsburgh; AIG Life Insurance; Capital Blue Cross Blue Shield; CIGNA; Connecticut General Life (CIGNA); Great West Life; Health America; Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield; Independence Blue Cross and Pennsylvania Blue; Inter-County Health Plan (ICHP); Keystone Health Plan; New York Life and Health; PA Blue Shield; Prudential Insurance Co.; The Hartford Life Insurance Co.; UNUM Life; and U.S. Healthcare

If your company does business with one of these firms and will offer domestic partner coverage be prepared to provide proof of your relationship. For example, a joint checking account, a mortgage or lease, or other legal document that includes both of your names. And unlike your married co-workers, you will be expected to pay taxes on the fair market value of your partner's coverage, that is, the amount the employer contributes to the health plan to cover the domestic partner, over and above the amount contributed for single and/or dependent coverage. No, it isn't fair, but it is a way to obtain comprehensive health coverage for the family you love.

BUYING OR SELLING A HOUSE?

Don't forget that Remax Real Estate Agent Gail Hoover has graciously offered to contribute \$100 to PA-GALA for any completed real estate transaction, when the client mentions they heard about her through this paper. So if you're "in the market" for a property in the greater Lehigh Valley, call Gail at 610-791-4400/ 433-7919 and mention PA-GALA and the Valley Free Press.

POP QUIZ

1. After gay advice columnist Dan Savage told of his lifelong search for a 70's record of Anita Bryant singing "Over the Rainbow," in his recent book, he received it as a gift from:
A. Rosie O'Donnell B. Anita Bryant C. Ru Paul D. Cher

2. A recent HRC commissioned poll shows ____% of all voters believe that gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve in military.

3. In ____ The Village Voice was the first employer to offer Domestic Partnership Benefits.
A. 1979 B. 1982 C. 1988 D. 1991

4. What reuniting comedy group has titled their 25 city tour, "Same Guys...New Dresses"?
A. Fire Sign Theatre B. Monty Python
C. Kids in the Hall D. 8 Lesbian Brothers

5. Melissa Etheridge and Julie Cypher have revealed the sperm donor father of their children to be rock legend: A. David Bowie B. Sting
C. Graham Nash D. David Crosby

6. MCC Rev. Mel White, when referring to the subject of a documentary being shown at the Sundance film Festival, said, "gay people love ____ because ____ loves gay people", about:
A. Tammy Faye Baker B. Dame Edna
C. Diana Ross D. Ricki Lake

7. What out lesbian was arrested at the UN, when she tried to speak to officials about 6 year old Elian Gonzalez?
A. Muffin Spencer-Devlin B. k. d. Lang
C. Liz Abzug D. Ann Hecht

8. In his State of the Union address, Pres. Clinton mentioned A. Mathew Shepard. B. the word gay.
C. Hate-Crimes Legislation. D. James Byrd Jr.

9. A survey of 2103 gay men and lesbians published in USA today found that ____% took a vacation last year. A. 45 B. 58 C. 70 D. 85

10. Recently three Southern California Bishops have denounced the anti-gay Knight Initiative. They represent the ____ Churches.
A. Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, and United Methodist
B. Southern Baptist, Baptist, and Congregational
C. Metropolitan Community, United Church of Christ, and Unitarian
D. Quaker, Presbyterian, and Christian Science

1 A 2 6 4 3 8 4 5 C 6 A 7 A 8 A 9 D 10

TO GET VALLEY FREE PRESS MAILED TO YOUR HOME EVERY MONTH, BECOME A MEMBER OF PA-GALA.

Valley Free Press is produced by RubyZebu Productions which owns the copyright thereto. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the express permission of the editors. Editors: Elizabeth Bradbury, Patricia Sullivan; Columnists: Elizabeth Bradbury, Patricia Sullivan, William Fatterman, Emily Dugan, Ruby Zebu, and others; Quality Control: Vita Lucid

SOME OF THE PRODUCTION COSTS OF THIS ISSUE OF VALLEY FREE PRESS WERE UNDERWRITTEN BY ELIZABETH BRADBURY ANTIQUES

8

We believe it would improve the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley if all people were legally protected from unfair discrimination based upon: race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or place of birth, sex, sexual orientation (actual or perceived), marital status, family status, age, handicap or disability, or use of a guide animal, in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodation. PA-GALA, Valley Free Press

Allentown Human Relations Commission

GLASS at Lehigh University

Safe-Space at Lehigh University

PFLAG of Lehigh Valley

ACCO - A Chorus Celebrating Women

GLORA

Pride of the LV

LV Gay Men's Chorus

GLB Student Union at NCC,

The Lehigh Valley Labor Party

EQUALi at Lucent

Metropolitan Community Church LV

OutThere-Cedar Crest

6th Street Shelter Allentown

LV Community Action Committee

GLEE at Air Products

FACT (Fighting AIDS Continuously Together)

SAGE at Muhlenberg

The Unitarian Universalist Church LV

GLOSS

LEPOCO

GLISN of Dun & Bradstreet

AIDS Service Center

Theatre Outlet

Integrity-Bethlehem

The Lehigh Valley Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

VFP will continue to

publish the "Honor Roll" of organizations supporting this Anti-discrimination Statement.

To add the name of your organization to this list, call (412-5449) or email VFP (litztrish@aol.com).

Distelfink[®] by Ruby Zebu 2/00 'A Best Seller'

Seven Habits of Highly Homophobic People

#1 Be Illogical
...the adopted son of these two gay men, was a crack baby who tested positive for HIV. No one else would adopt him. Now as a result of their care he's healthy.
Two Gay Men adopting a kid? That's selfish!

#2 Be Self-Righteous
Hate the Sin, Not the Sinner!
Calling them sinners but saying I love them proves I'm a good person. It does, really.

#3 Be Hypocritical
Gays are promiscuous and non-monogamous... Hey, aren't you the guy who dumped his wife of 30 years for a college student?

#4 Take it upon yourself to speak for God
GOD HATES FAGS

#5 Insist you're more worthy than people you don't even know
They should never be allowed to get the same benefits my husband and I received!

#6 Assume all straight people hate people who aren't straight
Gays are disgusting, don't you think so? Well actually... we're PFLAG parents.

#7 Insist you aren't homophobic
It's not that I'm afraid of them, I just think they are destroying civilization and should all be put on an island somewhere.

And don't you just know the worst ones are the ones that get turned on by gay movies!

The editorial columns and political cartoon that appear in Valley Free Press express the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or attitude of this publication. VFP makes no indication of the sexual orientation of persons, organizations, or businesses mentioned in any issue.